



Teach Your Dog How To Be Alone (In A Weekend)

When you bring your new dog home, you might find that he/she cries or even becomes destructive when first left alone. The first few weeks of transition from shelter to home environment can be very difficult for a dog. Follow the steps below to help your dog feel comfortable when left alone in the new surroundings.

This protocol is written to take place over the course of 2 days to help fit into the realities of most people's lives. Two days is *not* ideal. The more gradual and patient you can be going through the steps, the more likely you are to be successful. It may be more effective to work on this after a good long walk when your dog is tired and ready to relax.

Some dogs will learn easier than others. Please consult a professional before giving up on your dog.

Important: This protocol assumes that the dog does *not* already have a predisposed dislike of dog crates.

Day 1:

- Put comfy blanket or towels in crate. Use something you are not afraid will be destroyed.
- Keep crate door open.
- Stand outside the open crate, drop really good treats (like bits of hot dog, cold cuts, or cheese) in the crate, and praise your dog for entering. Drop treats while he is in the crate.
- Throughout the day drop really good little bits of food in crate. Do this especially when he's not looking. We want him to start periodically checking his crate on his own to see what deliciousness might be hidden.
- Tie a stuffed Kong toy to the inside of the crate a few times a day. To stuff the Kong, line the inside with a little peanut butter, and stuff the Kong with delicious food and treats.
- Feed all meals in crate. Try feeding meals in the Kong.
- At no point will you physically put him in crate or lock him in crate. At no point will the crate door closed.

Day 2:

- Repeat Day 1 exercises.
- When he is relaxed and eating his Kong or food, you will shut the crate door for 3 seconds then open. If he gets out of kennel, throw some treats in and repeat exercise. If he remains relaxed, you will try 6 seconds. Then try 12. Work up to about 1 min.
- If he can be relaxed (focused on a Kong/food) in the crate for 1 min with you in the room, you will step out of the room for 30 seconds. Make sure the Kong still has lots of tasty stuffing left in it before you step out of the room.
- If he is relaxed for the 30 seconds, enter and let out. Then repeat, doubling the time.
- If at any point in this process, he begins to demonstrate panic (whine, scratch at door, bark, etc), wait until a brief break (even a split second) in the demonstration, then let out of crate. Go back to your last successful step, and repeat that step.
- You will build the duration of leaving the room in increments, until you can leave the house. First leave for 1 minute. Then 5 minutes. Work up to 30mins.
- At that point you may try leaving your dog in his crate for more extended periods, with plenty of stuffed Kongs to occupy his time.